Dear Paul,

9/12/77

After viewing all of what your friend Rintels did with Ehrlichman's book I can well understand the high praises you heaped on him. He is a real craftsman. I am full of respect for what he has done. Unlike some of the reviewers, I think that for all its defects this was not only a fine piece of work in all respects - it was socially useful.

In that category I have only one question: the second false picture of the CIA.

I have not read Ehrlichman's book. I understand it says that the CIA brought Nixon down. That is false. The Rintels end is alsounfaithful. By this I mean not only in the overall Watergate story but to it and its record. The hint of and the regret over excesses, limited to cold war belief, is inadequate.

There was an interview on local Washington TV news during this series in which one of the LATimes reporters used as a consultant said he was unhappy that so much of the series was not like anything that really happened. I think I paid much more attention to Watergate than most reporters, have an entire file cabinet of materials on it, and I disagree with this criticism. One of the things that impressed me as I watched the series is what I took to be the consequence of legitimate dramatic handling of what competent research turned up. Leaving aside the who bedded with whom stuff and the above comment on the CIA there is no single incident of this nature in the film that I cannot connect with one that was Watergate reality.

It makes me more unhappy not to be able to spend time with people like Rintels, those who would use their medium for what is socially useful. I am sure that my files and head are loaded with what lends itself to the non-fiction novel treatment ABC seems to be going for. This includes some untold Watergate stories, one an effort to "get" a Justice of the Supreme Court.

In this connection, as of Saturday's mail I'd had no response from those I asked about interviews on the upper west coast. So as of now, when I got to Wisconsin the end of the month, I have no purpose in going farthur.

I thought the acting was excellent, too. Just about all, only some better than good. Robards, while being kind rather than unkind to Nixon, was magnificent in adifficult role. (Robinson and Rintels were too kind to Helms, one of the wrongest of the dedicated wrong, a man who made goodness of evil in his own mind.)

Of course this kind of treatment was safe long before the project started. I'd like to see some untold stories told this way. There is an entire system of society that is not secure, a creeping authoritarianism those who are well-off and overly-busy may not recognize as realities. Probably this concern even more than concentration on fact and accuracy distinguishes my work from that of others in the fields of myactivity.It was the doctrine of the week of lectures and seminars at Wisconsin last year and from the farout kids to the most conservative of the well-established it was loved - a universally accepted approach. (The University is now making audio and video cassettes of the entire week available at nominal costs, a project of the communications school,done by students.I'll send you a brochure.)

Seeing Vaughn handle so hard a role so well, so much in keeping with the real character, reminded me that in 1966 an actor name Bill O'Connell tried to interest Vaughn in my work, without success. At the same time Maggie Field tried to interest I think it was Burt Lancaster. Negative except for talk, that not with me. So I remain with the unhappy history of having two successful movies stolen from my earlier work, OSS and Gung Ho! and all interest in Hollywood in the whores, from the Lanes and Freeds to the Schillers. This means the corrupting of the medium and of history.

Time to take another walk. I did two miles in two walks by 8:20, listening to the radio all-news stations for an account of the Bernstein piece in Rolling Stone, hundreds of reporters working for the CIA, Including CBS. It released a statement not on its own major a.m. newscast, NBC carried nothing before at or after 7 a.m. and not a word in the Post. Best,